

Rural Court Reporter Duties per Judge David Christensen

Court Service Days

- Make verbatim records of any hearings that require a record or if party requests to have record made
- Mark and keep track of all exhibits admitted during hearings. At end of hearing, take custody and inventory all exhibits received before parties leave. Put exhibits in envelopes with listing of all exhibits for filing with clerk's office
- Field questions and inquiries from clerk's office staff, attorneys, and litigants pertaining to practices and procedures specifically related to how Judge Christensen likes to handle matters
- Check in attorneys and litigants upon arrival. Organize order that cases are presented to judge
- Usher people into courtroom for hearings done on the record
- Usher attorneys and litigants to judge's chambers for hearings not done on the record
- Take phone calls and messages when judge is busy
- Act as go-between from clerk's office staff to judge when he is busy
- Perform secretarial duties for judge – typing, making phone calls, faxing, writing calendar entries, filling out form orders for his signature
- Obtain necessary supplies from clerk's office for judge to be able to perform duties
- Work with attorneys and litigants to try to keep things moving in a timely fashion
- Make and distribute copies of orders and calendar entries when parties are present to save postage and clerk's office staff time of having to mail
- Make and mail copies of orders and calendar entries for cases where parties were not present
- Do trial scheduling conferences with attorneys and self-represented litigants. Frequently involves contacting attorneys who overlook this step of the case. Frequently involves having to contact rural case scheduling for trial dates as the parties have not done so in advance
- Call out names in the hallways of litigants that have not appeared
- Act as buffer between self-represented litigants and judge, explaining inappropriateness of them meeting with judge ex parte
- Check files for necessary documents and pleadings pertaining to hearing scheduled; i.e. returns of service, appearances, answers to petitions, etc.
- Work with self-represented litigants on domestic-abuse cases to ascertain if consent order can be entered without necessity of them having to go through very emotional formal hearing on permanent protective order. If so, acting as go-between to work out details of their agreement, recording the details on the permanent protective order, having parties sign-off on agreement, giving to judge to review and sign, and distributing copies to parties and appropriate law enforcement. Can be very time-consuming
- Be present as witness in judge's chambers if he has necessity to meet with self-represented litigants
- Pro-se dissolutions: Check file to make sure all necessary documents are filed; i.e. acceptance of service, answer, financials, etc. Check for inconsistencies between documents, particularly

financial affidavits and settlement agreement document (which there always are).

If parties are present, work with them to iron out inconsistencies. If real property involved, help them obtain legal description needed for decree. Fill out decree for judge to review, approve, and sign.

If parties are not present, write calendar entry notifying parties of inconsistencies in documents and setting matter for trial scheduling conference and requiring both parties to be personally present. Make copies and mail to both parties. When parties appear for scheduling conference, follow above procedure.

If settlement agreement is not on file, do calendar entry setting trial scheduling conference requiring both parties to be present. On conference day, meet with parties and fill out trial scheduling order for judge's review and signature. Distribute copies to both parties.

Pro-se dissolutions are always very time-consuming as all necessary documents are *never* completely filled out and *always* have inconsistencies.

- Judge's only support staff
- Juvenile court service days: Help keep judge's calendar and scheduling of cases as Judge Christensen does all of his own scheduling on juvenile cases. Keep a spreadsheet of all juvenile cases showing case number; child's name; parents' names; attorneys involved; DHS worker's name or JCO's name; dates of adjudication, disposition, permanency; next hearing date and type of hearing; date case closed; and related case numbers.

Bench trial

- Make sure all attorneys and litigants are present in courtroom to begin trial in a timely fashion
- Consult with attorneys at times on questions of procedures and how judge likes to handle various things
- Try to keep courtroom environment comfortable with regard to climate control and as quiet as possible
- Open court for the judge
- Perform all functions of making an accurate, verbatim record of the proceedings, including stopping proceedings when necessary if something is unintelligible, inaudible, or people speaking on top of one another
- Mark exhibits if not previously done by attorneys
- Keep track of exhibits admitted. At end of each day, inventory exhibits making sure all are accounted for. At end of trial, inventory all exhibits admitted and take possession of them. Make list of exhibits and put in envelope, box, etc. Make sure all exhibits too large to be put in some kind of container have label with case information on it
- When recesses have ended, gather attorneys and litigants back into courtroom

- Instantaneous read-back right from computer screen with realtime reporting
- When asked by judge or attorney, search record for certain testimony, objections, etc., with no delays
- Provide daily transcription, if needed, either in final or rough draft format
- Certified Realtime Reporter, so can provide realtime function when requested by judge, litigants, or hearing-impaired
- Provide clerical and secretarial functions for judge during noon recess, breaks, and before and after day's proceedings
- Provide expedited transcripts for litigants to be used in preparing briefs, proposed findings of facts, ruling, etc.
- Provide timely, accurate, verbatim transcript of any and all proceedings after completion of trial, whether for appeal or any other reason requested
- Type rulings, orders, etc., for the judge pertaining to the bench trial. Proofread any and all proposed rulings and the judge's final ruling. Verify accuracy of all case citations and quotations, etc. in the judge's rulings.

Jury trial

- All functions as set out above for bench trials except for the last item pertaining to the ruling aspect
- Help out court attendant with duties in conjunction with the jury. From this point forward we have been told we will not be provided with a court attendant for jury trials, so I will probably be in charge of the jury, in cooperation with clerk's office staff when available
- Get requested jury instructions from the attorneys; on disk, if possible. Prepare the jury instructions, giving consideration to the requested instructions submitted by the attorneys. Make any corrections or additions as instructed by the judge. Make copies for the attorneys. After making record on any objections the attorneys have to the instructions, make any changes deemed necessary by the judge. Makes copies of changes for the attorneys. Make copies of instructions for jurors to follow along when judge reads them
- Retain any written questions by the jurors during deliberations, mark them as an exhibit, and file them with the other exhibits at the end of trial.